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WHITHER THE NATIONAL FRONT?

by Zoebir A. Hadid

- Indonesia -

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Last Saturday, President Sukarno came back to the fatherland after having attended the 15th session of the General Assembly of the UN in New York. It cannot be denied that President Sukarno's mission to the General Assembly had a very significant meaning for the world in general and for our country in particular. As we know, President Sukarno is one of the five heads of state of the uncommitted nations, who, by means of a resolution to the General Assembly of the UN, suggested that President Eisenhower and Premier Khrushchev try to contact each other again for the sake of world peace. In addition to that, the president introduced before that international forum in New York the philosophy of our country, the Pantja Sila, and he proposed that this philosophy - which is said by the president to be greater than the Communist Manifesto and the Declaration of Independence - be mentioned in the Charter of the UN.

As already said, the president's mission and efforts during the time that he was away from Indonesia have significant meaning for mankind in general and for our nation in particular. However, not less important than the President's mission to the international forum, (some people would even say that these problems are more urgent and more concrete) are the domestic problems that the President will face when he gets back from abroad; problems that have to be solved as soon as possible for the sake of our revolution, which, as the President himself has repeatedly said, is not yet finished and is still going on.

When we talk about domestic problems, we are not solely thinking about the problem of food and clothing, about the scarcity of sugar, although its official price limit has been raised by 30%, about the difficulty in getting petroleum, although it is said that ours is an oil-producing country and that we are exporting oil, or the rise of the price of matches from 1 rupiah to 2 rupiah in a period of two months. Nor are we thinking solely about the security problem, because, as Minister of National Security General Nasution has said, this problem cannot be expected to be solved in one or two months, but will take another one or two years. Nor are we thinking about the problem concerning the political parties

(for example the prohibition of party activities) or other things that are regarded as impeding the revolution and thus have to be cleared away. All the above mentioned problems, especially the food problem, are indeed important problems. President Sukarno realized this, and therefore the first program of the Karya cabinet is to provide for food and clothing. However, no matter how important those problems may be, they are just aspects of the problems faced by the government and by the country; they are not basic to the success of the revolution.

This does not mean that those problems may be neglected. They should be faced seriously and should be solved. However, it is not President Sukarno who has to solve it, but his helpers in the Karya cabinet, that is, the ministers who are responsible for their respective fields. In facing these problems, the president has the function of a supervisor rather than as an executor.

In addition to his function as president/state head, President Sukarno has a more important function, that is, as leader of the revolution. Anybody, especially if he has a good education and has some practical experience, can be president, but not everybody can become leader of a revolution, be he well-educated and with long experience in the political world.

Dr. Oswaldo is president of the Cuban Republic. He has a good education, and has long experience in the political world, but he is not a leader of the revolution. The leader of the Cuban revolution is Fidel Castro who is, qua education and political experience, far beneath Dr. Oswaldo. However, Castro has an ability that Dr. Oswaldo does not have, viz. the ability to organize the masses, to wake them up, and to channel them. If Castro wished, he could easily become president and replace Dr. Oswaldo besides being the leader of the revolution; however, it cannot be said that Dr. Oswaldo could become leader of the revolution.

A revolution is a mass action and can only succeed with the support of the masses. As a veteran of the revolution and a leader of the Indonesian revolution, which, according to the president, because of its many facets is greater than any other revolution. President Sukarno is certain of the rightness of the thesis of the revolution and therefore he feels the absolute necessity for the formation of a mass organization, cast in the form of a National front, which was sworn in about 2 months ago, just a few days before the celebration of our 15th Independence Day.

However, ever since it was sworn in, the public has never seen nor heard of the activities of the National Front. Regional branches of the National Front, which should be the basis of the mass organization, are not formed as yet.

It is said that the Indonesian Revolution is not yet finished. If we accept the theorem that the revolution is based on mass action and that it can only be successful with the wholehearted support of masses, then how can the Indonesian Revolution be successful, if the power of the masses and the mass action are not organized and united in the National Front? The formation of a central board does not mean anything.

The answer to the above question is not that it is not meant to be

done, but that it is not yet being done. The public will ask then: when is it going to be done? Can the delay of the formation of these branches, whether intentionally or not, be accounted for before the revolutionary law?

We know that many of those that are selected by the president to become members of the central board are members of political parties. When he swore them in, the president said that the consideration in electing them was their ability in waking up the masses. The conclusion to be drawn is that those who are elected to be members of the central board of the National Front will fulfill his expectations.

It is indeed difficult to understand the President's policy in selecting members of political parties as members of the central board of the National Front. A mass organization will be a competitor of the political parties, will suck in their members, and will endanger the life of the political parties. The President's policy can only be understood if we regard it as a test of the loyalty of the leaders of the various political parties: Are they more loyal to their party, or are they more loyal to the revolution, which we will finish through support of the masses, united in the National Front.